

BETWEEN FLORENCE AND AVIGNON

sacrifice in persecuting the Church and her pastors,
and who say
in self-defence : ° They are wicked, and do everything
evil.' But
I tell you that God wills, and has commanded so, that,
even if the
pastors and Christ on earth were incarnate demons
(whereas the
latter is a good and benign father), we must be
subject and
obedient to him, not for their sake for what they are,
but to be
obedient to God because he is Christ's vicar." If
only they will
be reconciled with him, all Tuscany will have spiritual
peace and
repose, and the war will be turned against the
infidels ; otherwise,
" you and all Tuscany will have the worst time that
ever our
ancestors had. Think not that God is sleeping over
the injuries
that have been done to His Spouse." Let them,
then, eat this
passover of peace and union in the body of the
Church, where
the food of the soul is found and the wedding-
garment for the
nuptials of eternal life. " Pardon my presumption,
and impute it
to the love that I have for your salvation, both of soul
and of
body, and the grief that I have at the damage you are
receiving,
spiritually and temporally. And think that I had
sooner say it
you by word of mouth than by letter. If through
me anything
can be done for the honour of God, to unite you with
Holy
Church, I am ready to give my life, if it should be
needed."¹

Catherine had just received news from Raimondo at Avignon which filled her with peace and exultation. He had, like many others, probably been impressed by the mildness of the Pontiff's reception, and had over-estimated his pacific disposition. " Rejoice, rejoice, and exult," she writes in her paschal

letter to the friar and his companions, "for the time is at hand when the spring will bring us sweet-smelling flowers. And do not wonder if you see the contrary coming, but be then more certain than ever. I would fain never rest until I see a knife pass through my throat for the honour of God, so that my blood may remain sprinkled in the mystical body of Holy Church." And, in a postscript, she suggests, subject to Raimondo's approval, that Neri di Landoccio

¹ Letter 207 (198). Capecelatro and Augusta Drane refer this letter to Catherine's second embassy to Florence, but Tommaseo seems to me undoubtedly right in assigning it to this earlier occasion.